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JESUS AS A BOY.

SERMON PREACHED BY DR. TALMAGE SUNDAY, JUNE 9, 1889.

He Describes Christ as a Village Lad, and Holds That the Lord's Character Then Was the Same as When He Was a Man.

BROOKLYN, June 9.—A vast concourse of people, filling all the available places, joined in the opening orology at Brooklyn Tabernacle this morning. The pastor, the Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, D. D., expounded the passage in John about the unwritten works of Christ which the world itself could not have contained.

First, we have the brief Bible account. Then we have the prolonged account of what Christ was at thirty years of age. Now you have only to modify that account somewhat and you find what he was at ten years of age.

CHRISTMAS STORIES. We have a simplified book that was for the first three or four centuries after Christ's appearance received by many as inspired and which gives prolonged account of Christ's boyhood.

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story that his comrades in their play brought flowers and crowned him as a king? I should think they would have done so. Or the uninspired story that a boy, hunting for eggs in a partridge nest, was stung of a viper, and the poisoned lad was brought on a couch to the boy Christ, and Christ asked to be taken with the afflicted child to where the child was bitten, and at Christ's command the serpent, with its own mouth, drew forth the poison from the wound?

Yes, from the naturalness, the simplicity, the freshness of his parables and similes and metaphors in manhood I know that he had been a boy of the fields and had bathed in the streams and heard the nightingale's call and broken through the flowery hedge and looked out of the embrasures of the fortress and drank from the wells and chased the butterflies which travelers say have always been one of the dainty beauties of that landscape, and talked with the strange people from Damascus and Egypt and Sapphira and Syria who in caravans or on foot passed through his neighborhood, the dogs barking at their approach at sundown.

Let the world look out how it treads on a boy, for that very moment it treads on Christ. You strike a boy, you strike Christ; you insult a boy, you insult Christ; you cheat a boy, you cheat Christ.

And then it was not uncultivated grandeur. These hills carried in their arms or on their backs gardens, groves, orchards, terraces, vineyards, cactus, sycamores. These outbranching foliage did not have to wait for the floods before their silence was broken, for through them and over them and in circles round them and under them were pelicans, were thrushes, were sparrows, were nightingales, were larks, were quails, were blackbirds, were partridges, were bulbuls.

stick, beamed brightly through all the family sitting room as his mother was mending his garments that had been torn during the day's wanderings among the rocks or bushes, and years afterwards it all came out in the simile of the greatest sermon ever preached: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but in a candlestick and it giveth light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine." Some time when his mother, in the autumn, took out the clothes that had been put away for the summer, as noticed how the moth miller flew out and the coat dropped apart ruined and useless, and so twenty years after he enjoined: "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust can corrupt." His boyhood spent among birds and flowers they all colored and bloomed again fifteen years after as he cries out: "Behold the fowls of the air." "Consider the lilies." A great storm one day during Christ's boyhood blackened the heavens and angered the rivers. Perhaps standing in the door of the carpenter shop he watched it coming, and as the wind and rain fell, he saw the sweeping down from Mount Tabor and the other from Mount Carmel, met in the valley of Esdraron, and two houses are caught in the fury and crash goes the one and triumphant stands the other, and he noticed that one had shifting sand for a foundation and the other an eternal rock for basis; and twenty years after he built the whole scene into a parable of flood and whirlwind that seized his audience and lifted them into the heights of sublimity with the two great arms of pathos and terror, which sublime words I render, asking you as far as possible to forget that you ever heard them before: "Whoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

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learned the trade, for when the head of the family dies it is a grand thing to have the child able to take care of himself and help take care of others. Now that Joseph, his father, is dead, and the responsibility of family support comes down on this boy, I hear from morning to night his hammer pounding, his saw vacillating, his ax descending, his gimlets boring, and standing amid the dust and debris of the shop I find the perspiration gathering on his temples and notice the fatigue of his arm, and as he stops a moment to rest I see him panting, his hand on his side, from the exhaustion. Now he goes forth in the morning loaded with implements of work heavier than any modern kit of tools. Under the tropical sun he sweats. Lifting, pulling, adjusting, cleaving, splitting, all day long. At nightfall he goes home to the plain supper provided by his mother and sits down too tired to talk. Work! work! work! You cannot tell Christ anything now about blistered hands or aching ankles or bruised fingers or stiff joints, or rising in the morning as tired as when you laid down. While yet a boy he knew it all, he felt it all, he suffered it all. The boy carpenter! The boy wagon maker! The boy house builder! O Christ, we have seen when full grown in Pilate's police court room, we have seen thee, when full grown, thou wert assassinated on Golgotha; but, O Christ, let all the weary artisans and mechanics of the earth see thee, while yet undesized and arms not yet muscularized, and with the undeveloped strength of juvenescence, trying to take thy father's place in gaining the livelihood for the family.

CHRIST WITH THE DOCTORS. But, having seen Christ the boy of the fields and the boy in the mechanic's shop, I show you a more marvelous scene, Christ the smooth browed lad among the long bearded, white haired, high foreheaded ecclesiastics of the Temple. Hundreds of thousands of strangers had come to Jerusalem to keep a great religious festival. After the hospitable homes were crowded with visitors, the tents were spread all around the city to shelter immense throngs of strangers. It was very easy among the vast throngs coming and going to lose a child. More than two million people have been known to gather at Jerusalem for that national feast. You must not think of those regions as sparsely settled. The ancient historian Josephus says there were in Galilee two hundred cities, the smallest of them containing fifteen thousand people. No wonder that amid the crowds at the time spoken of Jesus the boy was lost. His parents, knowing that he was a possible forger that you ever heard them before: "Whoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a man which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

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ated. I have had many a sound sleep under sermons about the decrees of God and the eternal generation of the Son, and discourses showing how Melchisedek wasn't, and I give fair warning that if any minister ever begins a sermon on such a subject in my presence I will put my head down on the pew in front and go into the deepest slumber I can reach. Wicked waste of time, this trying to scale the unscalable and fathom the unfathomable while the nations want the bread of life and to be told how they can get rid of their sins and their sorrows. Why should you and I perplex ourselves about the decrees of God? Mind your own business and God will take care of his. In the conduct of the universe I think he will somehow manage to get along without us. If you want to love and serve God and be good and useful and get to heaven, I warrant that nothing which occurred eight hundred quintillion of years ago will hinder you a minute. It is not the decrees of God that do us any harm; it is our own decrees of sin and folly. You need not go any further back in history than about eighteen hundred and fifty-six years. You see this is the year 1889. Christ died about thirty-years of age. You subtract 33 from the year 1889 and that makes it only 1,856 years. That is as far back as you need to go. Something occurred on that day under an eclipsed sun that sets us all forever free if with our whole heart and life we accept the tremedous proffer. Do not let the Presbyterian church or the Methodist church or the Lutheran church or the Baptist church or any of the other evangelical churches spend any time in trying to fix up old creeds, all of them imperfect, as everything man does is imperfect. I move a new creed for all the evangelical churches of Christendom, only three articles in the creed and no need of any more. If I had all the consecrated people of all denominations of the earth on one great plain, and I had a voice loud enough to put it to vote, that creed of three articles would be adopted with a unanimous vote and a thundering aye that would make the earth quake and the heavens ring with hosanna. This is the creed I propose for all Christendom:

A UNIVERSAL CREED. Article First—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Article Second—"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief."

Article Third—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive blessing and riches and honor and glory and power, without end. Amen."

But you go to tinkering up your old creeds and patching and splicing and interlining and annexing and subtracting and adding and explaining, and you will lose time and make yourself a target for earth and hell to shoot at. Let us have creeds not fashioned out of human ingenuities but out of scripture phraseology, and all the guns of bombardment blazing from all the port holes of infidelity and perdition will not in a thousand years knock off from the church of God a splinter as big as a canniebrie nut. What is most needed now is that we gather all our theologians around the boy in the Temple, the elaborations around the simplicities and the profundities around the clarities, the octogenarian of scholastic research around the unwrinkled cheek of twelve year juvenescence. "Except you become as a little child you can in no wise enter the kingdom," and except you become as a little child you cannot understand the Christian religion. The best thing that Rabbis Simeon and Hillel and Shammai and the sons of Betair ever did was in the Temple to bend over the lad who, first, made ruddy of cheek by the breath of the Judean hills and on his way to the mechanic's shop where he was soon to be the support of his bereaved mother, stopped long enough to grapple with the venerable dialecticians of the Orient, "both hearing them and asking them questions." Some, referring to Christ, have exclaimed Ecce Deus! Behold the God. Others have exclaimed Ecce homo! Behold the man. But today in conclusion of my subject I cry, Ecce adolescent! Behold the boy.

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